

Introduction

Marshall Hall, Jr.

In 1981 Marshall Hall, Jr., retired as Professor of Mathematics at the California Institute of Technology. In connection with the occasion we wish to honor Professor Hall by dedicating this issue of the *Journal of Combinatorial Theory—Series A* to him. The papers included here have been contributed by some of Professor Hall's many friends, colleagues, and students.

His long and distinguished career in mathematics began with his doctoral dissertation on group theory written in 1936 at Yale University, under the direction of O. Ore. After a year at the Institute for Advanced Study, at Princeton, he returned to Yale to serve on the faculty until 1946. His association with Yale, where he had also been an undergraduate, remained very close, and in 1973 he received the Wilbur Lucius Cross Medal from Yale. During World War II he worked with the famous British team that broke enemy codes. In 1946 Professor Hall went to Ohio State University where he taught until 1959. It was there that he became one of the most distinguished authorities in the world on combinatorial mathematics and in particular in the area of designs.

In 1959 Professor Hall moved to Caltech and from 1973 he served as the first IBM Professor of Mathematics. At Caltech he maintained the traditional strength of the Institute in algebra, number theory, and combinatorics. At both Ohio State University and Caltech he produced many outstanding students, and attracted scholars from all over the world.

Professor Hall's many important papers on combinatorics and his book, *Introduction to Combinatorial Theory*, have had a profound influence on the development of this field. In particular his work gave structural unification to the discipline of combinatorics through the application of powerful algebraic methods. He has been one of the most significant figures in replacing the older relatively diffuse character of combinatorics by its present more systematic one.

Among his many services to the mathematical community we mention with particular gratitude his Chief Editorship of the *Journal of Combinatorial Theory—Series A* beginning 1971. We are pleased to be able to reassure our readers that his retirement from Caltech does not mean retirement from mathematics, and that he will continue as Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Combinatorial Theory—Series A*.

BASIL GORDON

BRUCE ROTHSCHILD

